

New Internationalist

The people, the ideas, the action in the fight for global justice

Saudi Arabia

NEW INTERNATIONALIST

EASIER ENGLISH

Upper-Intermediate

READY LESSON



This lesson:

- **Quiz + infographic**
- **Speaking**
- **Reading**
- **Language extension**
- **Posters**



Quiz

1) What percentage of the Saudi population are foreign workers? *a) 50% b) 30% c) 10%*

2) What percentage of students who finish university are women? *a) 75% b) 55% c) 35%*

3) What percentage of electricity in Saudi Arabia comes from renewable energy?

a) 50.5% b) 20.2% c) 0.1%

4) Approximately how many people were executed in 2015?: *a) 250 b) 150 c) 50*

5) What percentage of Saudi women have jobs:

a) 82% b) 52% c) 12%

6) How many websites were blocked by Saudi authorities?: *a) 400,000 b) 40,000 c) 4,000*

Check quiz and find more facts here:

<http://newint.org/features/2016/03/01/saudi-arabia-the-facts/>

Saudi Arabia



The FACTS

1 People

Population: **27.7 million**¹
An estimated **9 million** are foreign workers.²

47% of the population is under 25¹

82% is urban¹

85-90% of Saudis are Sunni Muslim.
10-15% are Shi'a Muslim.¹

Life expectancy: **75 years**
(Male 72, Female 77)¹

\$52,300 – GDP per capita, 2014
estimate. (US \$54,629)¹

2 Education and jobs

87% of Saudis are literate.¹

Universities produce **250,000-300,000** graduates a year; over half are women.

171,000 Saudis are studying abroad, most in the US.^{3,4}

Almost **30%** of young Saudis (aged 15-24) are unemployed (**21%** of males, **55%** of females).¹

4 Environment

10th largest CO₂ emitter in the world.¹

99.9% of the kingdom's electricity is generated from fossil fuels.

0.1% from renewables.¹

Saudi Arabia is one of the driest places on earth but water use is high:

Water use, per person per day:

Saudi Arabia **265** litres

Netherlands **121** litres

5 Rights

Saudi Arabia is an absolute monarchy and theocracy. Government and legislative council are appointed by the king, as are judges. Strict Islamic (sharia) law applies.¹

151 people were executed in 2015 (by November). That's 1 every 2 days, the highest since 1995.⁷

72% of those facing execution were sentenced for attending political

meetings, possessing drugs and other nonviolent offences.⁸

30,000 = estimated number of political prisoners⁹

0 = number of political parties¹

Gender

Women are treated as minors and prohibited from:

- Driving
- Opening a bank account
- Walking outside uncovered (only eyes and hands may be seen in many places)
- Going out in public unaccompanied by a male family chaperone or meeting non-family males in public
- Travelling abroad without permission of a male guardian.¹⁰

But in December 2015, for the first time in Saudi history, women voted and won seats in elections for local councils.

18 out of 2,100 council seats were won by women.

Male voters outnumbered female by **10 to 1** (1.3 million male and 130,000 female).

Only **12%** of Saudi women have jobs.⁵

Almost **60%** of Saudi jobs are held by foreigners. This includes nearly all service and private industry jobs.^{1,5}

3 Oil economy

9.7 million barrels of crude produced per day
(second only to Russia).¹

7.6 million barrels exported per day.
(No 1 exporter)¹

The petroleum sector provides **80%** of budget reserves and 90% of export earnings.¹

Saudi Arabia has **16%** of the world's oil reserves, the second largest of any country in the world after Venezuela.¹

Ghawar, the largest oil field, has enough oil to fill **4.7 million** Olympic swimming pools.⁶



Most people did not vote at all.¹¹

Homosexuality is illegal and punishable by death.

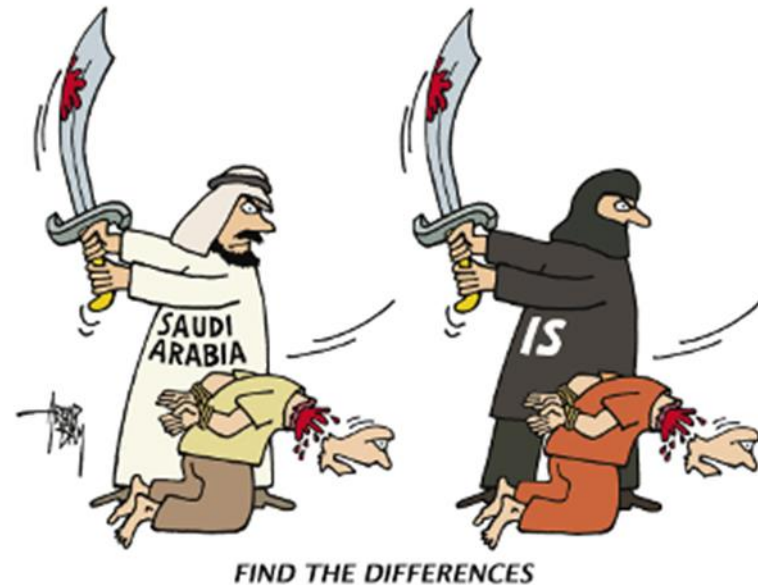
Freedom of expression

More than **16.2 million** internet users (nearly 60% of the population). Mobile-phone penetration is higher than Spain's: **193** subscriptions per 100 people.¹

But: **400,000+** websites blocked by Saudi authorities.¹²
Broadcast media is **100%** government controlled.¹

¹ Central Intelligence Agency (US)
² 7 December 2015 nin.tl/CIA-factbook
³ Arab News nin.tl/9m-expats
⁴ Paul Aarts, Carolien Roelants, *Saudi Arabia: a kingdom in Peril*, Hurst, 2015
⁵ Al-Araby nin.tl/saudi-students-abroad
⁶ Karen Elliott House, *On Saudi Arabia*, Vintage, 2013.
⁷ Business Insider nin.tl/facts-Saudi-Arabia
⁸ Amnesty International, nin.tl/saudi-executions
⁹ Reprive, *Justice Crucified: The death penalty in Saudi Arabia*, 2015 nin.tl/Reprive-report
¹⁰ Human Rights Watch nin.tl/Saudi-Arabia-Report
¹¹ Times of India nin.tl/Saudi-women-not-allowed
¹² Al Jazeera nin.tl/first-Saudi-female-politicians
¹³ Reporters Without Borders nin.tl/blocking-internet

Discuss: what do you know about Saudi Arabia? And what would you like to know?



Write 5 questions: things
you would like to know
about Saudi Arabia – these
pictures may help



Research: read one, or all, of these 4 articles about Saudi Arabia:

- [http://eewiki.newint.org/index.php/%27Our friends%27: Saudi Arabia and the West](http://eewiki.newint.org/index.php/%27Our_friends%27_Saudi_Arabia_and_the_West)
- [http://eewiki.newint.org/index.php/Saudi Arabia: Buying more arms ...](http://eewiki.newint.org/index.php/Saudi_Arabia:_Buying_more_arm_...)
- [http://eewiki.newint.org/index.php/Saudi Arabia is taking a risk with Islamic State and others](http://eewiki.newint.org/index.php/Saudi_Arabia_is_taking_a_risk_with_Islamic_State_and_others)
- [http://eewiki.newint.org/index.php/Saudi activists - who are they and what do they want%3F](http://eewiki.newint.org/index.php/Saudi_activists_-_who_are_they_and_what_do_they_want%3F)

1) Try to find answers to the questions you have written.

2) Make notes on problems and possible solutions in Saudi Arabia.



Discuss

In groups:

- **discuss your notes**
- **try to answer the questions you wrote**
- **talk about the problems and possible solutions**



Extend your language:



- **Choose one of the articles on slide 7.**
- **At the bottom of each is a link to the original article with more difficult vocabulary and more complex sentence structure.**
- **Read the original, compare it to the Easier English article and circle all the new language, phrases and collocations.**
- **Share what you've learnt with others, and practise the new language actively by writing new sentences.**

Poster

In pairs, decide on one important issue about Saudi Arabia and at least 5 new words or phrases from the original articles.

Make a poster about the issue using the new language.

Saudi Arabia



The FACTS

1 People

Population: **27.7 million**¹
An estimated **9 million** are foreign workers.²
47% of the population is under 25¹
82% is urban¹
85-90% of Saudis are Sunni Muslim.
10-15% are Shi'a Muslim.¹
Life expectancy: **75 years**
(Male 72, Female 77)¹
\$52,300 - GDP per capita, 2014 estimate. (US \$54,629)¹

2 Education and jobs

87% of Saudis are literate.¹
Universities produce **250,000-300,000** graduates a year; over half are women.
171,000 Saudis are studying abroad, most in the US.¹⁴
Almost **30%** of young Saudis (aged 15-24) are unemployed (21% of males, 55% of females).¹

4 Environment

10th largest CO₂ emitter in the world.¹
99.9% of the kingdom's electricity is generated from fossil fuels.
0.1% from renewables.¹
Saudi Arabia is one of the driest places on earth but water use is high:
Water use, per person per day:
Saudi Arabia **265** litres
Netherlands **121** litres

5 Rights

Saudi Arabia is an absolute monarchy and theocracy. Government and legislative council are appointed by the king, as are judges. Strict Islamic (sharia) law applies.¹
151 people were executed in 2015 (by November). That's 1 every 2 days, the highest since 1995.¹
72% of those facing execution were sentenced for attending political

meetings, possessing drugs and other nonviolent offences.¹
30,000 = estimated number of political prisoners³
0 = number of political parties¹

Gender

Women are treated as minors and prohibited from:
• Driving
• Opening a bank account
• Walking outside uncovered (only eyes and hands may be seen in many places)
• Going out in public unaccompanied by a male family chaperone or meeting non-family males in public
• Travelling abroad without permission of a male guardian.¹⁰
But in December 2015, for the first time in Saudi history, women voted and won seats in elections for local councils.
18 out of 2,100 council seats were won by women.
Male voters outnumbered female by **10 to 1** (1.3 million male and 130,000 female).

Only **12%** of Saudi women have jobs.¹
Almost **60%** of Saudi jobs are held by foreigners. This includes nearly all service and private industry jobs.¹⁴

3 Oil economy

9.7 million barrels of crude produced per day (second only to Russia).¹
7.6 million barrels exported per day. (No 1 exporter)¹
The petroleum sector provides **80%** of budget reserves and 90% of export earnings.¹
Saudi Arabia has **16%** of the world's oil reserves, the second largest of any country in the world after Venezuela.¹
Ghawar, the largest oil field, has enough oil to fill **4.7 million** Olympic swimming pools.⁶



Nearly half of Saudis are under 25.

Most people did not vote at all.¹¹
Homosexuality is illegal and punishable by death.
Freedom of expression
More than **16.2 million** internet users (nearly 60% of the population). Mobile-phone penetration is higher than Spain's: **193** subscriptions per 100 people.¹
But: **400,000+** websites blocked by Saudi authorities.¹²
Broadcast media is **100%** government controlled.¹

¹ Central Intelligence Agency (US)
² December 2015 ntn.ii.cia-factbook
³ Arab News ntn.ii.cia-factbook
⁴ Paul Aarin, Caroline Rowland, Saudi Arabia: a kingdom in Peril, Hurst, 2015
⁵ Al-Araby ntn.ii.cia-factbook
⁶ Karen Elliott House, On Saudi Arabia, Vintage, 2013
⁷ Business Insider ntn.ii.cia-factbook
⁸ Amnesty International, ntn.ii.cia-factbook
⁹ Reprise, Justice Crucified: The death penalty in Saudi Arabia, 2015 ntn.ii.cia-factbook
¹⁰ Reprise report: Human Rights Watch ntn.ii.cia-factbook
¹¹ Times of India ntn.ii.cia-factbook
¹² Al Jazeera ntn.ii.cia-factbook
¹³ Reporters Without Borders ntn.ii.cia-factbook